

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Risk Levels and Cases of COVID-19 in Southwest Nebraska

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Due to increased concern related to the recent numbers of positive COVID-19 cases in the health district, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) offers information to help residents understand their risk of COVID-19. When SWNPHD is investigating a positive case, contacts are placed into the following risk categories.

- **Direct contacts** are those who do not yet have COVID-19 but have been exposed to a positive case. They are high risk and most likely to develop symptoms of COVID-19. **Direct contact is being closer than 6 feet for 10 to 15 minutes or more, without a mask with someone who has the virus and is contagious.**
 - Direct contacts are to self-quarantine at home for 14 days after last date of exposure to positive case.
- **Secondary contacts** are those who have been around a direct contact. **Secondary contacts have lower risk of getting COVID-19 because the exposure is to a direct contact who may not be contagious. The secondary contact is not an exposure to a positive COVID-19 case.**
 - They are asked to self-monitor for symptoms, in the rare case they might become positive for COVID-19.
- **Third, fourth, fifth contacts** etc. are those who have been around someone who was around someone who was exposed to the virus. **Their risk is extremely low.**
 - They are asked to follow the same guidelines as the general public – wash hands often, clean commonly touched surfaces, keep a 6-foot distance from people outside your home, and wear a mask when you can't keep your distance.

It is important for all direct contacts of a positive COVID-19 case to follow the instructions they are given by public health officials, because when they do then there is less spread of the virus. There are times when a person who is positive for COVID-19 is unaware of it and has not been tested. They might have mild symptoms, or no symptoms at all. This is the reason for the guidelines that have been shared by government and health officials about limiting close contact in gatherings and public places. There are certain activities that are higher risk for spread of the virus from someone who does not know they are contagious, and other activities that are lower risk.

The COVID-19 Community Risk Dial for the week of August 3rd is yellow. Residents of southwest Nebraska should use caution when at gatherings or in public, including avoiding high-touch surfaces and wearing a mask. Choose outdoor activities when possible and avoid close contact in enclosed spaces. Those who are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 should stay home.

Additionally, in the past seven days SWNPHD has been notified of 10 people from the health district that have tested positive for COVID-19.

New cases include the following:

- One Dundy County resident – a female in her 20’s, related to travel.
- One Furnas County resident – a male in his 40’s, related to direct contact with another confirmed case of COVID-19.
- One Keith County resident – a female in her 30’s related to direct contact.
- One Perkins County resident – a female over the age of 80, related to travel.
- Two Chase County residents – a male in his 20’s related to travel, and a female in her 50’s currently under investigation.
- Four Red Willow County residents – a male in his 40’s related to direct contact, and three others related to community spread: a male in his 30’s, a male in his 50’s and a male in his 60’s.

SWNPHD also regrets to announce that there have been two deaths related to COVID-19, one male and one female both over the age of 80.

These cases bring the total to 80 confirmed COVID-19 cases. Fifty-four of the cases have recovered, and there have been a total of three deaths.

For more information on COVID-19 in southwest Nebraska, visit www.swhealth.ne.gov. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St in McCook.

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